

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01
TRSE-00 /086 W
-----123810 221011Z /10

P R 211445Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 78
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDEV PFOR IS
SUBJ: LABOR PARTY LEADERS COME UNDER PRESSURE

REF.: TEL AVIV 6552

1. SUMMARY: LABOR-PARTY-AFFILIATED SETTLEMENT FEDERATIONS ARE MAKING THEIR NEGATIVE POSITIONS KNOWN ON TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS. LABOR LEADERS MEANWHILE WALK THE FINE LINE BETWEEN SUPPORT FOR A TERRITORIAL/FUNCTIONAL COMPROMISE AND SETTLEMENTS BEYOND THE GREEN LINE.

2. A HAARETZ REPORTER SAMPLING LEADERS OF LABOR-PARTY-AFFILIATED SETTLEMENT FEDERATIONS FOUND THEM TO BE OPPOSED TO (A) WITHDRAWAL FROM THE TERRITORY ON WHICH ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS ARE LOCATED IN THE JORDAN VALLEY, RAFAH APPROACHES, AND ON THE GOLAN; AND (B) THE EXTENSION OF FOREIGN SOVEREIGNTY OVER THESE SETTLEMENTS.

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MENTS. KIBBUTZ MEUHAD FEDERATION SECRETARY YAAKOV TZUR STRESSED THAT THE SETTLEMENTS HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED IN AREAS VITAL TO ISRAEL'S SECURITY. THESE AREAS HAVE TO BE RETAINED TO GUARANTEE THE WELFARE OF THE COUNTRY. (KIBBUTZ MEUHAD HAS FOUR KIBBUTZIM ON THE GOLAN AND THREE IN THE JORDAN VALLEY.) AVRAHAM KATZ, A LEADER OF THE IHUD FEDERATION, STATED

THAT HIS MOVEMENT COULD NOT CONCEIVE OF ANY SETTLEMENT ON THE GOLAN, JORDAN VALLEY, OR RAFAH APPROACHES BEING OUTSIDE ISRAELI SOVEREIGNTY. (THE IHUD HAS THREE KIBBUTZIM ON THE GOLAN, THREE IN THE JORDAN VALLEY, AND TWO IN THE RAFAH APPROACHES.) BOTH TZUR AND KATZ EMPHASIZED THAT SETTLEMENTS HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED ACCORDING TO A SECURITY CONCEPT WHICH COULD NOT BE VIOLATED. MOSHAV MOVEMENT SECRETARY ARIK NEHEM KIN STATED THAT HE COULD NOT VISUALIZE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS FALLING UNDER FOREIGN SOVEREIGNTY, AND WAS OPPOSED TO WITHDRAWALS FROM TERRITORY ON WHICH MOSHAVIM WERE LOCATED. (THERE ARE THREE MOSHAVIM IN THE JORDAN VALLEY, AND SIX IN THE RAFAH APPROACHES.)

3. AT A DECEMBER 21 MEETING WITH PERES AND OTHER LABOR PARTY LEADERS AT MOSHAV PHASAEL IN THE JORDAN VALLEY, SETTLERS DEMANDED CONTINUED ISRAELI RULE IN THE OCCUPIED AREAS AND CRITICIZED BEGIN'S WEST BANK AUTONOMY PROPOSALS. PERES REPLIED THAT THE JORDAN WAS ISRAEL'S DEFENSE LINE AND THAT THERE COULD BE NO SECURITY WITHOUT THE PRESENCE THERE OF THE IDF AND SETTLEMENTS. HE ADDED THAT THE SETTLEMENTS WERE PERMANENT AND NOT TRANSPLANTABLE FLOWER-POT SETTLEMENTS.

4. GOLDA MEIR IN PARTICULAR HAS BEEN HITTING THE CON-
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CEPT OF FUNCTIONAL COMPROMISE AND DEMANDING THAT JEWISH SETTLEMENTS BEYOND THE GREEN LINE REMAIN UNDER ISRAELI CONTROL. SHE REITERATED THESE POINTS AT A RECENT LABOR PARTY COMMITTEE MEETING, BUT FOUND HERSELF ALONE AS PERES, ALLON, RABIN AND YAACOB ALL SPOKE OUT IN FAVOR OF A FUNCTIONAL SETTLEMENT. IN ADDITION, MEIR WAS CRITICIZED BY JERUSALEM LABOR PARTY

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SECRETARY UZI BARAM, WHO STRESSED THAT HER VIEWS RE-
JECTING FUNCTIONAL COMPROMISE DID NOT REFLECT THE
OPINION OF THE LABOR PARTY. HOWEVER, LABOR KNESSET
MEMBERS HAVE BEEN QUICK TO SPEAK OUT LEST BEGIN TAKE
LABOR READINESS FOR COMPROMISE AS A BLANKET SUP-
PORT FOR HIS PROPOSALS. PERES TOLD AN ALIGNMENT FAC-
TION MEETING THAT, ALTHOUGH HE SUPPORTED AUTONOMY AND
A FUNCTIONAL SOLUTION LINKED TO JORDAN, BEGIN'S PROPOSALS--
AS WERE KNOWN SO FAR--WERE SOWING THE SEEDS FOR A PALES-
TINIAN STATE.

5. AN EMBOFF SPOKE TO SIMHA ASSAF, SECRETARY GENERAL
OF THE HISTADRUT'S AGRICULTURAL CENTER (UMBRELLA
ORGANIZATION FOR ISRAEL'S KIBBUTZ AND MOSHAV FEDERA-
TIONS) REGARDING THE LABOR PARTY'S JUGGLING OF SUPPORT FOR
TERRITORIAL/FUNCTIONAL COMPROMISE AND SUPPORT FOR
THE SETTLEMENTS. ASSAF SAID THAT HE HAD ACCOMPANIED
PERES TO PHASAEL, AND ADMITTED THAT THE LABOR
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PARTY WAS HAVING A PROBLEM COMING TO GRIPS WITH ITS
SUPPORT FOR THESE CONTRADICTIONARY STANDS. HOW-
EVER, THERE SHOULD BE NO DOUBT THAT LABOR WILL BE-
HAVE IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER AND WILL NOT WAVE THE
SETTLEMENT ISSUE IN THE HOPE OF WINNING PUBLIC SUP-
PORT TO RETURN TO POWER. HE RECOUNTED HOW ONE OF
THE PHATSael SETTLERS HAD SUGGESTED THAT PERES LEAD
DEMONSTRATIONS AT THE KNESSET (ASSAF EMPHASIZE BEGIN UN-
DOUBTEDLY WOULD HAVE DONE THAT HAD POSITIONS BEEN REVERSED),
BUT PERES REJECTED THE SUGGESTION AND SAID THE WHOLE
ISSUE WOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE PARLIAMENT IN A
MATURE MANNER. AS FOR GOLDA MEIR'S ACTIVITIES, ASSAF
HAD NO IDEA WHY SHE WAS ATTACKING THE CURRENT CROP

OF COMPROMISE PROPOSALS. AS AN ASIDE, ASSAF SAR-
DONICALLY NOTED THAT THE JORDAN VALLEY AND GOLAN
SETTLERS HAD DESERTED THE LABOR PARTY AND VOTED FOR
THE LIKUD IN ORDER TO PREVENT ANY COMPROMISES. THEREFORE,
NOTHING COULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE THAN FOR BEGIN
TO PRESENT THE SETTLERS WITH A PROGRAM FOR
CONCESSIONS IN THE TERRITORIES. (COMMENT: ASSAF APPEARED TO
THOROUGHLY RELISH THE THOUGHT OF THIS.)

6. COMMENT: IN THE AFTERGLOW OF THE SADAT VISIT,
IT WAS NATURAL FOR LABOR PARTY LEADERS TO REFLECT
OPTIMISM ON THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE AND TO GLOSS OVER
THE FUTURE OF THE SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRI-
TORIES. HOWEVER, IT BECAME A DIFFERENT SITUATION
ONCE BEGIN'S COMPROMISE PROPOSALS BEGAN TO SURFACE
AND LABOR-PARTY-AFFILIATED SETTLEMENT FEDERATIONS
CALLED ON PARTY LEADERS TO REGISTER THEIR OPPOSITION,
ALTHOUGH LABOR HAS BEEN A STANDARD BEARER FOR TERRI-
TORIAL/FUNCTIONAL COMPROMISE, IT HAS ALSO BEEN THE
PRIMARY SPONSOR FOR JEWISH SETTLEMENT BEYOND THE
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GREEN LINE. PERES AND OTHER LABOR LEADERS THEREFORE
HAVE TO WALK THE TIGHTROPE BETWEEN THESE TRENDS. THE
LABOR PARTY WILL NOT BE AN IRRESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION
REJECTING BEGIN'S PROPOSALS ON PRINCIPLE. HOWEVER,
BEGIN WILL FIND THE ALIGNMENT PREPARED TO BE A VOCAL
CRITIC. VIETS

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